

## Berkeley Vision 2050 Community Meetings Summary

### Council Districts 5 & 6: March 30, 2022: 31 Participants

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- Many people expressed support for breaking this into multiple measures.
- Participants were supportive of a bond measure, though expressed some concern that new homeowners would shoulder the cost.
- There was broad agreement that public facilities and streets need repairs.
- For street repairs, there was disagreement on whether this tax should be focused only on those who used the roads (i.e. people who have cars) or on everyone since we all utilize the streets in some way.
- Affordable housing seemed to be the most contentious area of debate. Many people sought more clarity on the affordable housing component and what percent threshold of affordability new developments would be.
- Disagreement on how much funding should be allocated for the waterfront and concerns about gentrification of this neighborhood depending how investments are made.
- Participants worried not enough was being put into public facilities and that the City has not done a good job maintain them.

### Tax Structure:

- Encourages City not to have the tax burden fall primarily on new homeowners
- Regarding health and safety parks included: how this can be safe without looking at the unhoused population?
- Tax burden on homeowners is one of the highest in the state. Fixed taxes are in the neighborhood of \$3,000. Asks that people are mindful of that.
- Use kilotons or gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> as a performance measure to help us track climate change impact.
- One participant felt we should link usage of roads to cars, not houses by taxing the cars and use that to fund road work, but we can't raise gas taxes to European levels (\$12-13/gallon), so what about registration tax for Berkeley taxes? But another participant felt taxing car registration is regressive. Unless you attach it to the value of the car, it's picking on people that don't have the money.
- Everyone benefits from these improvements, so trying to align cost with all those who use it would be good.
- Doesn't want to see one large tax measure; wants us to split them up.
- If the bond is too big, it may not pass.

- Supports comment that this is a shared need and should be a shared expense. Parcel vs bond is a very important question.
- Generally prefers a GO bond to a parcel tax.
- Will this be on the ballot the same time the school measure goes? If they go together, one may fail.

#### **Housing:**

- At the Ashby housing development, can the City get 50-100% of units to be affordable?
- Feels ok about infrastructure, but doesn't feel like she has enough info on affordable housing.
- Can we set up another session about affordable housing to educate people?
- This measure feels awfully large. Housing component might be better split off as a separate measure.
- Wouldn't support affordable housing.
- Berkeley has consistently not built enough.
- Developers would rather take a project in El Cerrito or Oakland.
- Costs are higher in Berkeley than other East Bay cities.
- We should lean on market to fix what we hope is a short-term problem we are facing.
- We should talk to developers to see what's possible; don't just make a decree of 35%.

#### **Bike/Pedestrian:**

- Good to see improvements being made, but the bike boulevards are in poor condition.

#### **Roads:**

- People drive too fast; we should add more speed bumps or 15mph speed limit instead of 25.
- City needs to increase its participation in maintenance if the public is going to increase bonds.

#### **Waterfront:**

- Huge amount of money allocated to Waterfront. SLR is of critical importance, but there's also a rumor out there that we'll rebuild the pier and commercialize the area—which would be terrible.
- Participant doesn't agree with climate change projects at this stage or the marina at this stage (it's still developing a plan). We haven't done enough work yet on climate change to know what is needed. 2016 plan doesn't address SLR.
- Strong support for rebuilding the Berkeley Pier.

**Public Facilities:**

- We haven't been maintaining our facilities.
- Even with a \$600M bond, there is only \$75M dedicated to public buildings. How would this cover the vets/old city hall?

**Other:**

- The task force has many familiar faces. Would like to see new voices moving forward. Will there be a citizen advisory or citizen oversight group? Can we bring in some new blood to the decision-making process?
- City's move to program plan is important.
- Wildfire prevention should be part of this bond.

**Council Districts 7 & 8: April 6, 2022: 30 Participants**

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- There was concern that a bond measure would not allow the City to fund continued maintenance and suggestion that multiple funding measures might be needed to meet different needs.
- Multiple speakers pointed to the need to deal with homelessness in the City before you could even address other concerns like transportation, streets and parks.
- Interest in using developer fees to pay for certain improvements including bike lanes, trees and street lighting.
- Questions about how this broad vision is defined and interest in the City taking a wholistic view to funding measures and what works.
- Multiple speakers expressed concerns about pedestrian safety due to lack of street lighting and poor street conditions.

**Tax Structure:**

- Wants to ensure high quality of life for Berkeley residents. Urge the cafeteria approach. Vote separately on climate issues, housing, etc.
- Would like parcel tax to fund needs.
- Funding must include low income and senior exemptions.
- Concerned with the use of infrastructure. Worried about the wide spectrum. If bond, it will be for infrastructure only, and not include maintenance. The city is way behind in maintenance. Concerned the city is focused on spending money, but never in the correct places.
- Problem with Measure O bond and higher interest rates. Allowed \$4.5 Million in tax credits to go to the church. Would there be an oversight committee? Proceeds would not

end up with third parties, tax credits (cutting out-difficult to hear) tax credit proceeds are given to politically powerful parties.

- Discussed the gas tax, and funding city streets.

### **Housing:**

- Going forward we need to be very clear on how much will be for PW and true infrastructure, and not put into other amenities. Do not include housing. It's not infrastructure.
- Questioned if the City has rezoned around the Ashby BART station?
- Regarding health and safety parks included: how this can be safe without looking at the unhoused population?
- How can you address transportation without addressing the unhoused population? We need transportation planning/planners.
- Should require bike lanes, small parks, to be provided by new developers when new developments are built. Partnerships and or requirements with developers.
- Supports the prior speaker regarding developers helping out more. Worried about urban island heat effect. Building houses increases the temperature of your city. What can we do to mitigate the increase of temperature? Concern of loss of trees in the city. Net impact of heat and loss of trees to our city. New lighting should be done in a way that is not negative to wildlife.

### **Bike/Pedestrian:**

- Students are in favor of bicycle transportation.
- Urges attention to sidewalks. Walking in the streets at night presents challenges: lighting, tree roots, etc.

### **Roads:**

- Infrastructure should actively mitigate climate change. Hope to see the framing changed in the 2050 Vision, have performance measures match.

### **Other:**

- Would rebuilding the culverts for the underground creeks be included? Discussed the loss of a pool and a skating rink, but spend tons of money on other things.
- Who defines what this vision is?
- Who's the architect on this whole thing?
- Comprehensive, not a piece meal thing. Make the city a more livable place. How are we going to put together an assessment on what works? Will we have a feedback loop?

Find out feedback from the people who are using the infrastructure, is it working? Will it really work for people who use all types of transportation?

#### **Council Districts 3 & 4: April 13, 2022, 28 Participants**

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- Multiple participants expressed concern over the size of the need and felt the City should brake it into bite-size pieces over many years.
- Concern over the opaqueness of Berkeley's finances and whether the money would actually deliver results for the community.
- Many participants at this meeting expressed concerns over climate and how it interacts with housing, infrastructure and urban biodiversity.
- Concerns that communities like South Berkeley and seniors who rely more on cars will be left behind if we reduce roads and add bike lanes.
- Support for fixing the Vets Center and old City Hall.

#### **Tax Structure:**

- Would like to see a parcel tax that relates to size of units, especially new units, because we know that the size of the unit correlates to climate impact.
- Slow way down. This should be multiple measures over many years, and they should be well cooked. Streets are ready now. Should be a \$150M bond, over 10 years.
- \$100B gives sticker shock. Can we give perspective of timelines, e.g. how much did infrastructure cost 50 years ago? Will my road not be paved until 2050?
- On CC repair, a consultant was engaged to do a report on CC transformation, charged City \$600k; bulk of report had nonsensical recommendations. At same time, there was issue of where to put public restrooms in Berkeley. Consultant was hired for \$300k. Nothing happened with this. The way the City spends its money is opaque. He tried to find a list of all the consulting contracts over past several years. You can't do it unless you have very special knowledge and guidance. Will be difficult to support bond measures on anything without confidence in the ability of the City to use the money effectively. That's a problem that has to be confronted in any infrastructure plan.
- Before major bond issues are put before the public, need to clean up your act about Berkeley finances, and have transparency about what is being spent, and what it is being spent on.

#### **Housing:**

- Also interested in relationship of this to housing unit plans and BART plans.
- Are we planning to include electrification in affordable housing?
- We need affordable housing.

- For years, has tried to find out about Berkeley's affordable housing trust fund. Where the money comes from, where the money goes. He was recently informed that there is no such thing; instead, there are a variety of different funds. Trying to find out what goes in and what comes out takes detective work.
- Question re: Bart development and density bonus mechanics: can public funds confer a density bonus on a project or does developer need to request one?

### **Bike/Pedestrian:**

- We'll see a massive increase in bicycling; electric bikes, especially.
- Current situation for bicyclists isn't safe enough. As we think of vision 2050, green, bicycle-based transportation should be at the top of the list.
- Need to coordinate efforts. Hearst was repaved and there's not a bike lane there because the entire infrastructure was ripped up and repaved poorly, perhaps because they're doing sewer work? Not safe/easy to ride.
- Long time South Berkeley resident. Please don't demonize driving to make it hard for seniors to keep track with bikers. Appreciates bikers but it makes it much harder for all of us that are getting older.
- Wants to see universal design/accessibility incorporated into sidewalks and streets; wants to see it called out as another form of equity.
- Between now and 2050, biggest population will be seniors and disabled. Suggests grounding this in predicted changes in who will be here economically and demographically, and make sure that components of plan speak to less mobile and more locally dependent on streets and sidewalks. (Not just bicyclists)

### **Waterfront:**

- On resiliency and Waterfront, we need to do the planning first.

### **Public Facilities:**

- Stress importance of 2 buildings: old City Hall and Veterans Building. Both neglected for a long time; need to address seismic and other renovations. Once retrofitted, can serve the public, and equity will be an important feature; e.g. including an art center and public museum. Wants to see those in the program plan draft.
- Historic downtown buildings could be a special place for community.
- Support for rehab of old City Hall, Veterans Building and CC Park.
- Atmosphere of community pride can be elevated by renovating these buildings.
- Preservation of architecture; supports Veterans Building, would love to see it reopened. Would be happy to review plans/studies pro bono for historic properties.

- Trying to save old City Hall and Veterans Building to get a bond issue passed to keep those beautiful and historic buildings. Hopes we can keep these buildings, which are a joy for people of color and a lot of people in Berkeley.

**Other:**

- In the possible results slide there were goals to adapt to the effects of climate change, but nothing to directly curb emissions. That should be a main part of the city's plan.
- Appreciates metrics, and hopes we'll have a baseline from which to address equity, affordable housing, sidewalks
- Inappropriate to put sewer charges and green infrastructure in this.
- Wants to focus on urban biodiversity and support local ecology. We need to support birds and insects. Would like to see that consideration incorporated into all decisions. How can we create a nature-filled City with no net heat gain in our City; no net increase in impermeable surfaces? How can we put permeable spaces back in, potentially in streets?
- Lighting is a known disrupter for birds and associated with cancer in humans. Choose least disruptive options.
- London is a national park City, good model.
- There are many new buildings going up in Berkeley. Berkeley is committed to electrification. Yet, there is no clear requirement for them to have solar. That would be a useful and good thing.
- We need to get Bird Safe Ordinance codified especially if a large BART development is coming.
- Also wants to see this incorporated in websites. Some depts haven't been able to do this well.

**Council Districts 1 & 2: April 20, 2022, 35 Participants**

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- Lots of support for a parcel tax measure instead of a bond.
- Lots of interest in funding being used for the MTC to support their work.
- Many felt that the Marina is being treated differently from other parks and in that way not being given equal attention.
- Multiple participants brought up that this funding could help achieve Vision Zero priorities.

**Tax Structure:**

- Parcel tax can go into maintenance, which a bond cannot; and while maintenance has gotten better, weeds, grasses, etc. need more attention. We don't need to look so shabby.
- Sees need for infrastructure, but needs a better understanding of bottom line how it would impact his tax bill.
- It's important to put money toward maintenance; so, the hybrid revenue measure is interesting.
- Supports parcel tax over bond
- Being able to spend on maintenance and have exemptions for low income and others is important
- Wants to do that through a parcel tax.
- Parcel tax can bring us up and help us maintain.
- He's concerned with how we'll control how money will be spent.
- She was disappointed in the allocation of T1 bond funds.
- Parcel tax: a lot of people are concerned with what they're being charged on including earth basements. Need to figure out fair ways to decide what's fair square footage.
- As a homeowner, parcel tax is the more equitable situation given what a lousy deal we have with prop 13.
- We weren't able to pass a local carbon tax; but I'd love to see that fund our climate mitigation projects.
- We should do what will pass, on a practical level.

#### **Housing:**

- Affordable housing is one of the top priorities. Goes to equity and quality of life.

#### **Bike/Pedestrian:**

- Focused on bike infrastructure improvements
- This is good opportunity to make a major improvement, and advance Vision Zero goals.
- If we're serious about bike safety, let's focus on highest needs first.
- Would like to see more vision of the bike boulevards carried out especially at crossings and major intersections.
- Totally in support of biking and climate change and parks, but hopes affordable housing doesn't get lost. Especially in Berkeley with all of our progressive values.

#### **Roads:**

- Sidewalks are exploding; wrong trees were planted; wants to see better tree selection.

- Wants to see attention to streets, which are dangerous for cyclists and important for climate.
- Struggled for years with state of Berkeley streets.
- Need better streets. Top priority.
- Really hopes parking and traffic will be addressed on Park Street.
- Would love to see Frances Albrier used by whole city; but we need parking addressed before plans get too far along.

**Waterfront:**

- Pier has been closed since 2015; nothing has been done to fix it.
- Related problem: lots of talk to use General Funds (GF) for maintenance. But General Fund is part of the problem. It's been raiding the TOT for decades. If Marina was treated as a park, instead of a cash cow for the GF, things would be much better.
- Stop treating Marina parks separately from other parks in Berkeley. Why do they have to pay for their own streets, garbage, etc; why aren't they treated like the library system and valued like the jewels they are.
- Don't see the Marina out to WETA to turn into a high-capacity commuter hub.
- Frequent user of marina parks; especially grateful for road improvements there.

**Public Facilities:**

- ADA her priority; especially in parks. Sidewalks need to be taken care of.
- Why wasn't Frances Albrier comm center construction included? Important equity issue.
- Civic Center is a priority.
- Will there be reasonable restrooms added at CC? Having porta potties there is embarrassing.
- Compliments on the great play areas.

**Other:**

- Wants to see equity, spread out investments across the City of Berkeley
- Priorities mainly relate to climate, bike infrastructure, phasing out natural gas